

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 00316 210859Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 H-01 /012 W
-----099001 210903Z /11
P 210826Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6991

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, ET, US
SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL LETTER TO FORMER CHARGE TIENKEN

REF: STATE 016979

1. EMBASSY RECEIVED CONGRESSMAN ROONEY LETTER OF NOVEMBER 22 VIA DIPLOMATIC POUCH DECEMBER 5, 1977. EMBASSY HAS ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT WZO. MEHERET NUMEROUS TIMES PAST MONTH WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. HOWEVER, FROM OTHER UNIDENTIFIED FAMILY MEMBER LIVING AT HER ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER, EMBASSY HAS LEARNED THAT WZO. MEHERET WELL AND PROBABLY JUST ABSENT FROM HOME AT TIMES WHEN EMBASSY HAS ATTEMPTED TO CONTACT HER. UNIDENTIFIED FAMILY MEMBER STATED THAT BOTH TEKESTE AND BEREKET TEDLA ARE NOW LIVING IN ASMARA AND ARE WELL. THEIR FATHER, BASHAI TEDLA ZEWLDI STILL LIVING IN ADDIS AND WELL ALSO. SINCE CLOSURE OF AMERICAN CONSULATE IN ASMARA APRIL 1977, THERE LITTLE OR NO OFFICIAL CONTACT BETWEEN AMERICAN EMBASSY AND ASMARA RESIDENTS AND IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR EMBASSY ADDIS TO ASSIST TWO BOYS. AS FOR BOYS BEING ON GOVERNMENT LIST, EMBASSY UNABLE TO DETERMINE IF THIS TRUE, BUT IN ANY CASE LIKELIHOOD OF THEIR BEING ARRESTED OR VICTIM OF OTHER REPRESSION GREATLY DIMINISHED BY BEING IN ASMARA RATHER THAN ADDIS ABABA, DESPITE CONTINUING INSURGENCY THERE. BECAUSE OF THE BOYS' RELATIVE SAFETY AT PRESENT, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT BEST TO REMAIN UNINVOLVED IN
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THEIR CASES, LEST ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT DRAW ANY INCORRECT CONCLUSIONS THAT COULD AFFECT THEIR WELL-BEING.

2. PLEASE EXPRESS OUR REGRETS TO CONGRESSMAN ROONEY THAT THE RESPONSE TO HIS LETTER HAS BEEN DELAYED UNTIL NOW. WE TRUST HE UNDERSTANDS THE DIFFICULTY EMBASSY HAS HAD TRYING TO CONTACT WZO. MEHERET AND THE EXTREMELY DELICATE SECURITY

SITUATION FOR MANY ETHIOPIANS THESE DAYS THAT COULD POSSIBLY BE AFFECTED BY TOO CLOSE AN ASSOCIATION WITH AMERICANS. THIS CABLE ONLY AN INTERIM REPLY, AS EMBASSY STILL ATTEMPTING TO CONTACT WZO. MEHERET DIRECTLY. FORMAL LETTER TO CONGRESSMAN ROONEY WILL FOLLOW VIA POUCH.

3. CHARGE, WHO JUST BECAME AWARE OF LETTER TO TIENKEN, ISSUING INSTRUCTIONS THAT ALL CONGRESSIONAL MAIL BE BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION AND THAT ANSWER, AT LEAST AN INTERIM ONE, BE PREPARED WITH FAM LIMITS.
MATHERON

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